



News Release

For immediate release: November 4, 2010

(10-173)

Contacts: Tim Church, Communications Office 360-236-4077; 360-534-0068 pgr
Donn Moyer, Communications Office 360-236-4076; 360-786-2537 pgr

Board of Pharmacy votes to draft new rules on patient access to medications

Proposed rule language will be drafted after additional information is presented

OLYMPIA — The state Board of Pharmacy today voted to write new rules that attempt to remove barriers and improve patient access to time-sensitive medications.

The board asked staff to clarify the effects of existing pharmacy and pharmacist responsibility and stocking rules and provide additional information to help draft the new rule language.

In August, the board opened the rulemaking process to consider whether additional rules would improve and better assure patients have access to medications. The current rules and proposed new rules apply to all medications, though the issue centers on drugs that some pharmacies and pharmacists are unwilling or unable to stock and dispense, including emergency contraceptives.

The board's 3-to-2 vote today came after members reviewed thousands of public comments before discussing the best course of action. Many public comments were heard at two stakeholder meetings; more than 5,000 comments were received in writing. The board had three options today: drop the rulemaking process, go ahead with the process and start drafting proposed rule language, or delay the decision to get more information.

Board staff will provide the additional information at the next regularly scheduled meeting on December 16 so members can provide direction on specific rule language to propose. When draft language is adopted, the board will hold a full, open rulemaking process that includes public input in writing and at a public hearing.

The board adopted its current rules on pharmacy and pharmacist responsibility in 2007. Under those rules, pharmacies must assure all valid prescriptions in stock are delivered when needed for effective use. Individual pharmacists may decline to dispense medicines if the pharmacy has policies and procedures in place to provide timely access to medications.

— More —

Board of Pharmacy rules vote

November 4, 2010

Page 2

These rules have been the subject of a lawsuit, which is on hold during the rule making process.

Information on the [access to medications rules](http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/ATM/Default.htm) (www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/ATM/Default.htm) is available online.

###

Visit the Washington Department of Health website at <http://www.doh.wa.gov> for *a healthy dose of information*.